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Black History Month 2025: Honoring Black Labor and Uplifting Black Voices

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Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 1:02 PM



Hi Troy,

As we celebrate Black History Month, we recognize that African Americans have always been on the [front lines of labor struggles](#)—whether in the factories, on the docks, in government jobs, or in domestic work. From the fight for fair wages during the civil rights movement to today's battle for workplace safety and job security, Black workers have continually led the charge for dignity and justice in the workplace.

At Jobs to Move America (JMA), we take inspiration from this legacy to push for equitable, good-paying jobs that benefit workers and communities alike. Great strides have been made, but we know there's more to be done. That's why this month, and every month, we fight to ensure Black workers and all workers have the respect, wages, and protections they deserve.

Raising the Bar with Community Benefits Agreements

One of our proudest achievements at JMA is the launch of the Jay Mehta **Community Benefits Agreement Resource Center (CBARC)**—a resource we created to empower workers and allies to ensure companies don't use public funds to exploit labor. Our CBAs, like the one we secured with electric bus manufacturer [New Flyer of America](#), serve as a guiding light for how public investments can create **real opportunities** for historically marginalized workers. This agreement required New Flyer to remain neutral toward the possibility of a worker's union, allowing workers to organize free

from intimidation. It also set hiring and promotion goals for underrepresented workers, ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are tangible realities and not just ideas.

I have spent over 45 years working in the state of Alabama—as a Black man, every single day. And trust me, my employers never let me forget it.

Even as Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity initiatives are under attack across the nation, at JMA we stand firm in our mission because we know these agreements don't just improve individual workplaces, they create a real voice for workers and communities—**voices that have been missing from the conversation for quite some time.**

The success of the **New Flyer CBA** proves what we've always known: **money talks, and when public funding is tied to worker protections, companies listen.** That's why we continue to create strong CBAs year-round, not just in February, ensuring Black workers and all workers get what they've earned.

Worker Safety: A Right, Not a Privilege

For too long, Black workers have been disproportionately exposed to unsafe working conditions. It's no accident that some of the most dangerous jobs in this country—whether in construction, or manufacturing are held by Black workers. **That's why we prioritize workplace safety.** Through **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA 10 and 30 Hour) training**, led by organizers like myself, we empower workers with the knowledge and tools to **protect themselves on the job. A safe job is a right, and CBAs help enforce safety standards that hold companies accountable.**

Continuing the Legacy of Black Labor Activism

From A. Philip Randolph organizing the Pullman Porters in the early 20th century to today's labor movements in the South, Black workers have long been at the forefront of labor activism. But the fight is far from over. I recently completed the 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training, hosted by the A. Philip Randolph Institute in Pittsburgh. This training was a powerful reminder of how workplace safety is not just a benefit—it's a right.

As corporations continue to fight unionization using fear and divide-and-conquer tactics, and politicians attempt to roll back workers' rights while using deceptive language and empty promises, we remain steadfast. **Regardless of the political climate, JMA will always champion diversity, equity, and inclusion because Black workers in America deserve better.**

Let's honor the past by fighting for the future this Black History Month and demand workplaces where **ALL workers' voices are heard, their safety is prioritized, and their labor is valued — no exceptions.**

In solidarity,



Larry Hodge
Senior Alabama Organizer

Join us in the fight for good jobs and healthy communities.

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4/18/25, 12:53 PM

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